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ABSTRACT

This brief paper offers an inventory to help implement change strategies and achieve person-centered planning for people with severe disabilities. The inventory is intended to examine use of 12 resources that facilitate change and increase the chance of good outcomes. A visual display of the model on which the inventory is based is provided first. For each resource, the inventory explains its meaning, then asks the user to determine its role for the individual in question, and then offers space for user ideas for discovering, developing, or building on the resource. The 12 resources are: (1) a person with a strong desire for change; (2) a support circle; (3) at least one committed champion; (4) a community builder; (5) a skilled facilitator; (6) a productive process; (7) a positive view of personal capacities; (8) a personal vision for a rich community life; (9) connections to wider communities; (10) an agency committed to change; (11) influence with people in authority; and (12) flexible resources to support positive action. (DB)

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INCREASING THE CHANCES FOR DEEPER CHANGE THROUGH PERSON-CENTERED PLANNING

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Increasing the Chances for Deeper Change Through Person-centered Planning

Beth Mount, John O'Brien, & Connie Lyle O'Brien

Some changes come easily: people's requests for something different fall within existing know-how and ability to respond. In these happy circumstances, planning involves getting clear about the request for change, scheduling the necessary steps, tracking progress and troubleshooting. But some changes take people into new territory. These deeper changes call for learning to do new things in new ways, require redirection of existing investments and the discovery of new resources...and often mean saying good-bye to familiar beliefs and habits of practice.

Some communities have established the capacity to assist people with severe disabilities to study in ordinary schools, work at real jobs, and live securely in their own homes. In these places, deeper change has already happened and routine planning and problem solving will usually serve people well. But in many places, available services can't support inclusion without learning to do something very different from their routine offerings. People and families and their allies will have to make the path to a rich, full community life by walking it together.

A change process should be no more complex than the change required. An easy change demands skill in routine planning and problem-solving. Deeper change takes smart, hard work over time. What drives the work is a search for capacity in the person, among family and friends, in communities, and in services. What sustains this work is the desire for a more just and inclusive community and the expectation that publicly funded services should provide personalized assistance. Reflection on the experience of many deeper changes identifies 12 resources that each increase the chances for good outcomes when innovation is necessary. When each resource is strong, it increases the contribution of the others.

Use this inventory to review your situation. Completing it will suggest possibilities for building or maintaining the strength you need. If a resource is missing, don't get discouraged, think about how you might take steps to develop it. If a resource can't be developed, think about how other resources might compensate for the missing one.

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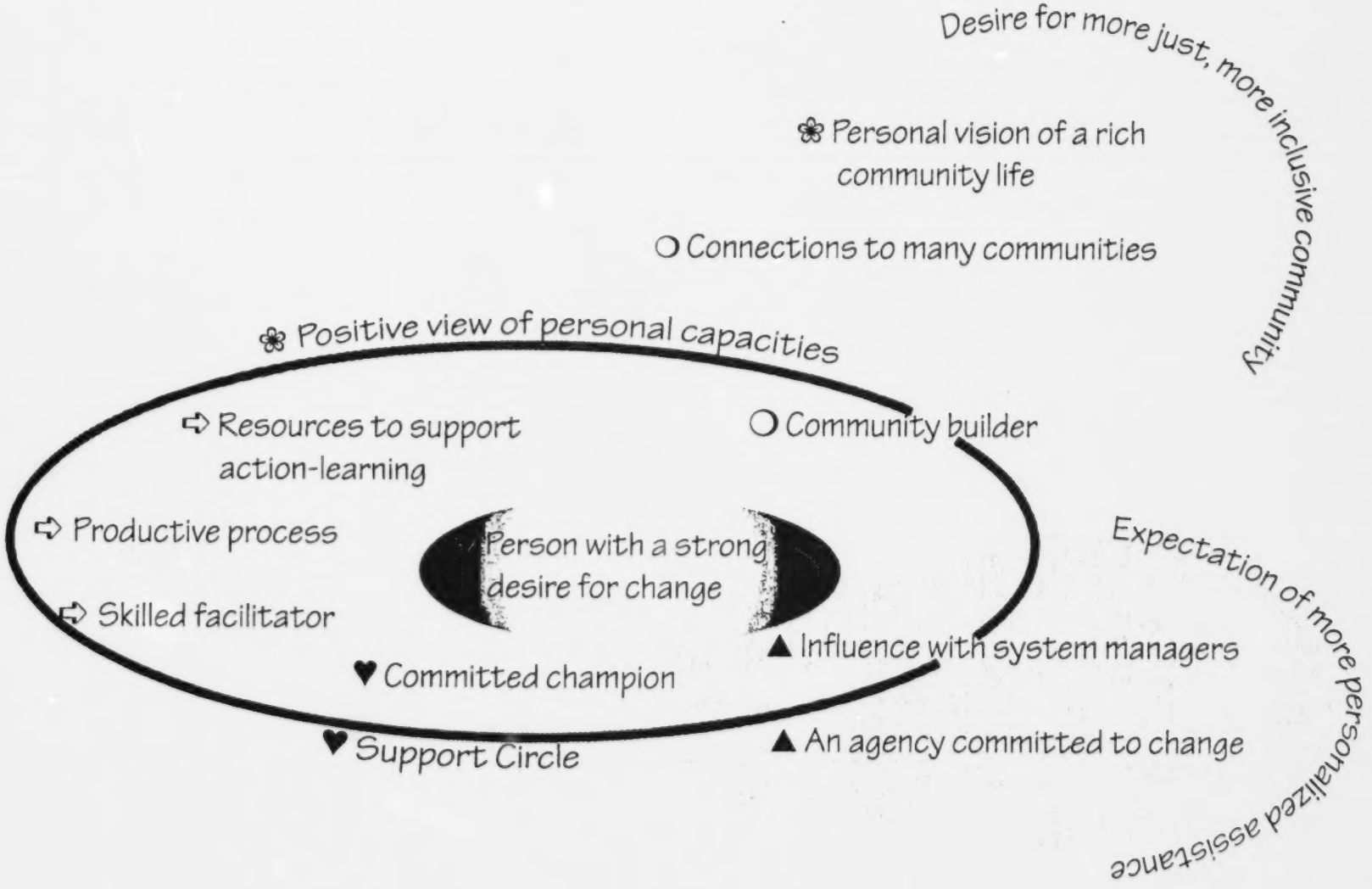
Desire for more just, more inclusive community
❀ Personal vision of a rich community life
❍ Connections to many communities
❀ Positive view of personal capacities
➪ Resources to support action-learning
❍ Community builder
➪ Productive process
Person with a strong desire for change
Expectation of more personalized assistance
➪ Skilled facilitator
▲ Influence with system managers
♥ Committed champion
♥ Support Circle
▲ An agency committed to change

Committed, Organized People

A Person with a Strong Desire for Change

The focus person, or someone who cares about the person, wants a change that existing opportunities and supports don't make easy to accomplish. The desire is strong enough to motivate a search for something better and to overcome reluctance to ask others to get involved in the action.

Ideas for discovering, developing, or building on this resource

___This is missing right now

___We could strengthen this resource

___This is a real strength for us to build on

A Support Circle

People who care about change happening for the focus person choose to give their time and resources to working for change. They see themselves as an action oriented group that exists with and for the person, commit themselves to working alongside the focus person and meeting from time to time for as long as it takes to assure that the person has a secure and interesting community life. The more diverse the group's skills and connections the more they can get done. The better they are able to listen and see things from the focus person's point of view, the more the focus person will be strengthened by their support.

Ideas for discovering, developing, or building on this resource

___This is missing right now

___We could strengthen this resource

___This is a real strength for us to build on

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At Least One Committed Champion

At least one involved person has a relationship that transcends roles, laws and rules. This person is there with the focus person for the long haul, is very slow to settle for second-best, and wants to do or persuade others to do whatever it takes to keep moving into a positive future.

___This is missing right now

___We could strengthen this resource

___This is a real strength for us to build on

Ideas for discovering, developing, or building on this resource

A Community Builder

A person who is familiar in the local community and brings the community's knowledge and folklore with them either belongs to the support circle or is willing to provide practical help, good leads, introductions, and advice. The community builder know who needs to talk to whom in order to open doors for the person.

___This is missing right now

___We could strengthen this resource

___This is a real strength for us to build on

Ideas for discovering, developing, or building on this resource

A Skilled Facilitator

A facilitator guides the focus person and the support circle as they create a shared vision, as they figure out the action steps necessary to move toward the focus person's vision, and as they review what they have learned together and deepen their shared understanding of how the focus person can live a rich, full life.

___This is missing right now

___We could strengthen this resource

___This is a real strength for us to build on

Ideas for discovering, developing, or building on this resource

A Productive Process

Defining a vision is only the first step. Real change almost always takes a long time. The focus person and the support circle have ways to keep refining vision and revising action as things develop.

___This is missing right now

___ We could strengthen this resource

___This is a real strength for us to build on

Ideas for discovering, developing, or building on this resource

Vision

Positive View of Personal Capacities

Those involved with the focus person find ways to discover and emphasize capabilities and potential for positive action in the focus person, in the community, in the service system, and I themselves.

___This is missing right now

___ We could strengthen this resource

___This is a real strength for us to build on

Ideas for discovering, developing, or building on this resource

Personal Vision for A Rich Community Life

The focus person and those involved craft and communicate a lively and interesting vision of the person as an involved, contributing community member. A community vision stimulates creativity and sustains action better than a system-oriented vision that promotes more or better services or seeks compliance with rules or legal requirements.. The circle finds ways to give the vision creative expression through media that have meaning for the person and communicate vividly with others: graphics, sculpture, fabric art, music.

___This is missing right now

___ We could strengthen this resource

___This is a real strength for us to build on

Ideas for discovering, developing, or building on this resource

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Connections to Resources

Connections to Wider Communities

Ideas for discovering, developing, or building on this resource

When members of the support circle are actively involved in community organizations, self-help groups, and interest groups, they can link the focus person to resources and opportunities. Without this connected knowledge, it's possible to get stuck because the support circle is limited to only what the service system can offer. Often these offerings don't match the focus person's interests or preoccupy the focus person and the support circle with fighting scarcity in services.

___ This is missing right now

___ We could strengthen this resource

___ This is a real strength for us to build on

An Agency Committed to Change

Ideas for discovering, developing, or building on this resource

At least one agency involved with the focus person sees a direct connection between change for the focus person and the agency's learning better ways to realize the agency mission.

___ This is missing right now

___ We could strengthen this resource

___ This is a real strength for us to build on

Influence with People in Authority

Ideas for discovering, developing, or building on this resource

Some members of the support circle have direct access to people in positions of authority in the service system. They can negotiate face-to-face for necessary changes to usual system practices and policies.

___ This is missing right now

___ We could strengthen this resource

___ This is a real strength for us to build on

Flexible Resources to Support Positive Action

There is sufficient time and money for the focus person and support circle members to learn about new possibilities and to try out new ways to do things.

___This is missing right now

___We could strengthen this resource

___This is a real strength for us to build on

Ideas for discovering, developing, or building on this resource

Summary

Use this space to note your impressions about the ways current resources work together to improve the chances for real change. Review your ideas for discovering, developing, and building on the resources you have now and note any common themes or key areas for action.

Next Step

What will you do within the next 24 hours to strengthen the resources available for the change you want?

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